

*Tennessee Board of Law Examiners*  
*Statement of Policies and Procedures*

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For all Applications:

- An application filed with the Tennessee Board of Law Examiners (TBLE) but not filed with the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) is not a complete application. Applicant will not be approved to sit for the examination or admission until the application is submitted to both organizations. However, an application to be admitted under Article 10 of Rule 7 for In-House Counsel does not have to be submitted to the NCBE but must be prepared at the NCBE online site using the NCBE forms for Tennessee.
- Until you are admitted to the Tennessee Bar or your application is otherwise terminated, you are under a continuing obligation to keep your application current and must update responses whenever there is an addition to or a change in the information previously provided to the Board of Law Examiners. An application on file for two or more years must be supplemented before moving forward in any step of the admission process. Applicant must request an updated NCBE Character report every two years the application is open.
- Fees must be paid in full and cannot be waived. Additionally, fees are non-transferable. If an applicant withdraws from an exam prior to the date of the exam, Applicant might be entitled to a partial refund; the balance of the fee is administrative and cannot be applied to future applications for admission, regardless of the type of application.
- The Certificate of Eligibility is evidence that the Applicant has met all criteria for licensing. In order to be eligible to practice law, Applicant must take the oath as prescribed by Tn. Sup. Ct. R. 6 and complete the “activation process” with the Board of Professional Responsibility.

Applications by Examination:

- After the February, 2013, examination, a Notice of Intent will no longer be required. A new form has been adopted for the Tennessee Supplement.
- Applicants to the Bar of Tennessee are responsible for ensuring that all documents are submitted to the Board of Law Examiners in a timely manner. Applicants may be notified by the Board that there is a deficiency in the file; however, such notification is a courtesy. Failure of the Board to notify an applicant of a deficiency does not entitle the Applicant to an extension of time to submit the required documentation. The Board strongly recommends Applicants use a mailing service with tracking or delivery confirmation as the Board cannot immediately verify receipt of a document by mail. The final deadlines require submission of original documents or online filing of documents as will be set forth in Rule 7. A fax or email of a document for which the original is required will not satisfy a deadline. (Adopted at July, 2013 Board Meeting)

- The Board strongly discourages Applicants from waiting until the final deadline to submit an application. If anything is missing, Applicant will not be eligible to sit for the examination. (Adopted at July, 2013 Board Meeting)
- Fees must be paid in full or postmarked prior to the final deadline or the application is not complete. Your cancelled check is your receipt. (Adopted at July, 2013 Board Meeting)
- Applicant must achieve a passing score of 75 on the MPRE within 2 years of successfully completing the Tennessee bar examination. MPRE scores within 2 years of successfully completing the bar examination in another state will only be accepted if within 2 years of successfully passing the Tennessee bar exam.
- Applicants who successfully complete the bar examination and otherwise meet all admissions criteria must be admitted and take the oath within two (2) years of successfully passing the Tennessee bar exam. All scores and investigations must be updated after two years.
- REINSTATEMENT OF LICENSE: In accordance with TN Sup. Ct. Rule 9, §§ 19 and 20, a petitioner requesting reinstatement of a license to practice law, after having been suspended, disbarred or assumed inactive status, must first petition for reinstatement and may not take the Bar examination in advance of a determination of such petition absent order from the Supreme Court. Upon entry of the order of the Supreme Court directing the petitioner to take the bar exam, the petitioner must apply for examination as required of any other applicant with the same fees and deadlines and forms, including the NCBE application and background check, and attach a copy of the order directing petitioner to take the examination. Because of the change in the content of the examination and the scoring of the examination, a petitioner who is ordered to take the Tennessee Bar examination must take the full examination. (Adopted at the June 3, 2013, Board Meeting)

#### Grading of Examinations:

- GRADING: Applicants must achieve a score of 270 or higher in order to successfully complete the Tennessee bar examination. The Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) counts for 50% of the score; the Multistate Performance Test (MPT) plus the 9 Tennessee essays together constitute 50% of the score. The MPT is the equivalent of 3 essay questions or 12.5% of the score; the remaining essay questions are 37.5% of the score. **The TBLE does not re-grade the MPT or essay questions. Grades are released only to Applicants who are not successful on the examination.**
- The TBLE will not search for your answers or make changes to incorrectly formatted or numbered essay questions resulting from failure to follow the laptop testing or answer booklet instructions, including typing an answer in the wrong space or deleting, adding, editing or renumbering the preloaded dividers, or writing multiple answers in one answer booklet or incorrectly numbering an answer booklet. The answer will be given to the grader assigned to grade the question indicated on the cover sheet or booklet cover

of the answer. If the answer does not match the question or is blank, Applicant will receive a zero for that question.

- In order to provide unsuccessful applicants some insight regarding areas that require additional study, the Board will report the following scores to unsuccessful applicants: the overall total Tennessee Bar Examination score, the MBE scaled score, the total scaled essay score and the raw scores for the individual essays. There is no change in the information reported to successful candidates. The raw scores are assigned by a local grader on a scale of 1 to 6, with a zero assigned if no attempt was made to answer the essay or the attempt was completely incorrect. The score given for the MPT is 12.5% of the total scaled score (25% of the total essay component) and the remaining 9 essays account for 37.5% of the total scaled score (75% of the essay component); the MBE is 50% of the total scaled score. (Adopted at the June 3, 2013, Board Meeting)
- The essay questions from the four most recent bar exams are posted on our website at [www.tn.gov/lawexaminers](http://www.tn.gov/lawexaminers). Essay questions are posted as soon as possible after grade release.

#### Use of Laptop for Essay Examination:

- **LAPTOP TESTING:** Applicants who wish to take the examination by laptop will be permitted to do so only if the complete application (Application for examination or reexamination, Tennessee Supplement, attachments and full fee payment) is filed with the Board of Law Examiners before or with the Laptop Testing Form and Release of Liability.

#### Advisory Opinions:

The TBLE does not give advisory opinions.

#### Interviews:

- Interviews of Applicants seeking admission by examination **must** appear for a personal interview. In cases of extreme hardship, the Applicant may file a written request with the TBLE for a telephone or Skype interview. The interviewer must agree to the request before it will be approved. The request must include an explanation as to why the Applicant cannot appear in person at the interview.
- The requirement to be interviewed cannot be waived. Applicant will not be eligible for licensing until the interview has been completed.
- If an Applicant was interviewed more than 2 years prior to the time the Applicant becomes eligible for admission, the Applicant must submit a written request for another interview.

#### Reference Letters:

- If a recommendation letter is from a relative, that fact must be disclosed in the letter. An Applicant's parents, grandparents, siblings or spouses who are practicing attorneys may not submit a recommendation letter.

Posted December 2012, and updated as noted.